

THE GENDER SERIES:  
AN EDUCATIONAL VIDEO SERIES ON GENDER THEORY  
AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENDER MIXER

A CREATIVE PROJECT  
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BY

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## Chapter 1

In early 2013, I came out. Not as gay as the term often applies but as genderqueer. This is a term that I had heard only a year before and before I did, I had no way of naming the issue that had plagued me my whole life.

I discovered the term genderqueer not by accident per se but while trying to understand why I never really felt comfortable in life or with other people. The discomfort I felt with my place as a man in this society started to take its toll on me in 2011 and '12 so I started taking online personality tests. Many of the results from these older tests referred to me as a "feminized male" or some variation on the idea that I was a man who had a strong feminine side. The descriptions that accompanied the results did not fit me and in many cases they included suggestions for seeming more "manly," something I had no interest in.

These tests are obviously heavily grounded in what has become known as "the gender binary." This cultural construct shapes much of Western thought on gender so that people in our culture believe that there are only two genders each tied inextricably to one of the typical biological sexes. In other words, males are men and should act like men— self-confident, aggressive, dominant, wear a suit and tie or work clothes, like sports and trucks, etc.; females are women and should act like women— accommodating, emotional, wear frilly things and like art, music and "chick flicks." Basically, I was told to "man up" by these tests—stop being emotional, artistic and willing to compromise. Again, this was something I had no interest in.

While these tests may have been unsatisfying in their results, they did point me in a direction that I had not let myself consider until that point, my gender. From these tests, I learned that I had to consider the idea that I may be a transgender person. It still didn't feel right. I didn't feel like a woman in a man's body or any of the typical clichés but I decided to take another series of personality tests, tests that look at an individual's psychological gender.

Using tests like the Combined Gender Identity and Transsexuality Inventory (CoGIATI), the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BEM) or the BBC Health Gender Test is problematic because they often rely on stereotypical or even sexist views of gender (e.g. questions asking how much a person likes math or how well they parallel park with the assumption that women respond negatively to both); however, in my case, every one of these tests that I took came out with the same result. I am a psychologically androgynous person, an androgyne. An androgyne is not merely a man with a strong feminine side or a woman with a strong masculine side but rather an individual with personality traits, behaviors, an outlook, presentation, etc. that draws from those traditionally associated with both men and women. It is not about acting like a man in some instances and a woman in other but always being a blend of both.

This was not just a new word to me but a new concept. I did not know that Western psychology as represented in these tests recognized that some people fall somewhere in between the cultural ideals of men and women. As I read the descriptions that came with the results, I realized that I had found my answer. I was bad at being a

man, I was uncomfortable trying to be a man simply because I am not a man, nor am I a woman.

I had to know more so I spent the next several months looking for material about being an androgyne (where I discovered that “genderqueer” is the more modern nomenclature) and about gender theory in general. I was able to find books and articles in both scholarly journals and popular magazines and I found a plethora of blogs about people’s personal experiences. It was through these sources that I learned enough to be confident to make a Facebook post in January of 2013 explaining my gender status.

What I could not find in my research though was the very first type of media I tried to access, a video. I often find it very beneficial to start with a video on a subject when I am just starting to learn a new concept because the combination of a lecture with a visual demonstration greatly speeds up the learning process. I came to this way of thinking from my own research into education. In my paper “Can Video Save the Radio Star?” I conducted a meta study of video techniques used in music classrooms and found that those students who are exposed to videos of concerts and other performances were more likely to understand the musical compositions and the function of ensembles than students who simply listened to audio-only recordings. More research in the field since my study has expanded upon this concept. For instance, CH Li’s 2016 study shows that video used in English as a second language classroom increased comprehension and sped language acquisition; Merkt and others released a study in 2011 that demonstrated videos presented with print material aid learning; and Munzer’s study from 2009 shows that animations engage the spatiologic centers of the

brain and increase understanding. This is not to say that I could not find any video on the subject of gender theory or transgender persons. There is a plethora of them on the internet. What I could not find was a video that harnessed the full power of video in teaching.

Most of the videos I found were obviously directed to a general teenage audience with young presenters in front of urban-chic backgrounds with flashy special effects and camera effects and energetic dance music providing the soundtrack. The information in these videos was often limited to simple definitions with little background information provided. Little attempt was made to put the information in context or to provide the theoretical underpinnings of the definitions. This left titles like "Everything You Need to Know about Being Transgender" seeming empty to me because they did not use the techniques that I and others have researched as seen above.

I had become accustomed to watching videos such as TEDTalks ([www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)) or the RSA Animate series ([www.thersa.org/discover/videos/rsa-animate](http://www.thersa.org/discover/videos/rsa-animate)) which give an audience a sound primer on a particular subject. These videos also use editing and special effects, but in these the effects are put into service of the information utilizing animations and direct examples of the material being discussed instead of being the focus of the presentation. When I went looking for videos like these on gender theory, I simply couldn't find anything that lived up to these standards. Many videos, little information.

I spent the next few years studying gender theory through books and articles from both scholarly and popular journals, but I never gave up looking for a good video on the subject though I was always frustrated in the search. Once I had a firm understanding of the material, I realized that I had actually identified a need for the type of video I had been searching for and that this was a need that I could now fulfill myself. This was the inspiration for *The Gender Series* and *The Gender Mixer*.

My first goal for this series is for each episode to function as a primer for a different topic within the field of gender theory—the gender binary, biological sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, romantic orientation and gender presentation. As with any good primer, each episode should give a broad overview of the topic with enough information to educate the audience to the basics and promote interest in further exploration by showing relevant source material.

A secondary goal became the development of the *Gender Mixer*, an educational aid to visualize gender theory within *The Gender Series*. I determined that I needed an original visual aid to help explain gender concepts, something similar to Sam Killermann's *Genderbread Person 3.3* which involves sliding values for the various gender components displayed around a gender-neutral gingerbread cookie.

(<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2015/03/the-genderbread-person-v3/#sthash.cXHW4bya.dpbs>)

My take on this concept, *The Gender Mixer*, is based upon my familiarity with audio mixing boards and my realization that psychological constructs such as Alfred Kinsey's Hetero/Homosexual Scale<sup>1</sup> or Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences<sup>2</sup> as well as Killermann's Genderbread values could all be represented on a structure like a mixing board.

The goal of each video is to teach a basic lesson about a gender theory concept and then construct a new part of *The Gender Mixer* so that the audience could better understand how the various parts of the theory relate to the others. As each element of gender (biological sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, romantic orientation, and gender presentation) is introduced, it is broken down into components and each of those components are assigned a control slider on a mixing board like construct. This allows the video to make use of the spacioreasoning faculties of the viewers' brains as found in Munzer's study while the visuals provided during the discussion of the elements gives viewers a better understanding of the concepts as seen in Merkt's.

1. Kinsey, Alfred C, Wardell Baxter Pomeroy, and Clyde E Martin. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1948.

Kinsey's Hetero/Homosexual scale proposes that human sexuality can be placed on a scale from zero (0) to six (6) where 0 indicates strict heterosexuality and 6 indicates strict homosexuality.

2. Gardner, Howard. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. [20Th anniversary ed.]. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2004.

Gardner states in this book that human intelligence is comprised of seven different intelligences which we all have to varying degrees.

The final creative goal for each episode is to simply be entertaining. The information cannot simply be read to an audience in the hope that the information itself would be enough to hold their attention. The information needs to be performed in an engaging way, with levity to brighten up the technical details and with accompanying graphics to both elucidate the concepts and to provide another level of interest to the viewers.

From a technical prospective, my goal was to follow the old production rule, keep it simple. The videos would be as simple as possible, a single presenter in front of a white background with accompanying graphics which comment upon or illustrate the concept being discussed. No flashy effects or sound effects would be used and the graphics would be limited to simple photographs or stick figure animations.

The reason for this simplicity is to ensure that the focus of the videos would always be the information being presented. One of the problems I had with the videos I originally found was that production often outshined the content and I was determined not to let that happen in these videos. By keeping the presentation simple, emphasis is placed on the words being presented as well as the accompanying images and animations which we have seen increases the educational value of the videos.



## CHAPTER 2

Unfortunately, the videos that originally inspired *The Gender Series* no longer seem to be online. They had names like “Everything You Need to Know about Being Transgender” or “Everything You Need to Know about Gender.” To be frank, they did not contain everything you needed to know about those subjects. These videos were essentially a series of presenters, usually millennial women, reading definitions of terms often heard in the discussion of gender and transgender studies presented as a music video. Little detail, context or historical background was given for these definitions so while they may have been a useful resource, they did not truly serve as a primer on the subjects. Because they are not currently online, I am unable to provide a link or name the original producers of the videos.

A video which influenced the *Gender Series* from October, 2012 is still available from YouTube. The Vlogbrothers’ “Human Sexuality is Complicated . . .” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXAoG8vAyzI>) is similar to *The Gender Series* in that it is a single presenter talking about sexuality using a small number of simple graphics. There are two main differences though between this video and the videos of *The Gender Series*. First, the video is presented as a vlog, a video blog where the presenter is talking into a webcam in his bedroom while in the *Gender Series*, I try to achieve a certain level of professional presentation. Second, the Vlogbrothers attempt to cover nearly all the subjects the *Gender Series* does including biological sex, gender identification, sexual orientation and romantic orientation in three minutes and twenty-eight seconds. Here again, a video presentation is given on the subject of gender theory

but really there was only time for basic definitions to be given without much context or historical background. In the *Gender Series*, I attempt to give as much information as feasible on each element of gender theory while providing the needed context and historical background.

Each of the episodes of *The Gender Series* tackles a different aspect of gender theory so each has different literature upon which it is based. For instance, Episode One: "The Gender Binary" is heavily influenced by the works of Kate Bornstein. In her seminal work, *Gender Outlaw* (1994), Bornstein posits that the way Western society looks at gender has less to do with biology and is more about culture. She used the term "Gender Binary" to identify our society's belief that there are intrinsic differences between men and women to which we should all adhere. Bornstein makes the simple observation that if gender differences were indeed intrinsic, then no one would feel pressured to act like their birth sex. They simply would. Bornstein's book documents ways the gender binary is taught and enforced by our society, shows ways the binary was already starting to break down in the early 1990s and serves as a call to action for creating a genderless society.

In episode two, I introduce the "Gender Mixer". This teaching aid is inspired by three distinct sources. In 1948, Alfred Kinsey introduced his Heterosexual/Homosexual Scale in the paper [Sexual Behavior in the Human Male](#). Kinsey demonstrated that human sexual behavior does not fall neatly into two camps, heterosexual and homosexual. Instead, most humans display an attraction to both sexes to varying degrees and those degrees can be plotted on a scale between the two extremes. Kinsey's research is a

foundational building block of modern gender theory. Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983) by Howard Gardner is the second work that forms the basis of the Gender Mixer. As the name implies, Gardner details his theory of multiple intelligences in this book which holds that human intellect is not a single thing but rather an interplay of seven different types of intelligence. This is why an individual can be quite talented in one area while fairly inept in another and it is rare to find a person who has a high degree of intelligence in all seven areas. Sam Killermann released version three of his "Genderbread Person" on March 16, 2015.

(<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/>) This gender-neutral gingerbread cookie surrounded by continuums for various aspects of gender is Killermann's "edugraphic" that he uses on the internet and in performance to explain those parts of gender theory.

Combining these three ideas—human behavior can be expressed as a continuum, what is usually considered a single aspect of human behavior can actually be made up of multiple parts, and that gender theory has already identified those parts of gender—with my experience using an audio mixing board was the genesis of The Gender Mixer.

For Episode 3: "The Spectrum of Sex," I rely on an article from the journal Nature to form the basis of the argument that biological sex exists on a continuum instead of the strict binary that we're taught in school. In "Sex Redefined" by Claire Ainsworth (2015), the findings of twenty different sex development studies and interviews with the scientists who conducted the studies are used to show that human biological sex is not the dimorphous model we're all familiar with. From this article, I was directed to the

work of several researchers who have looked at physical, hormonal and genetic causes of atypical variations of biological sex in humans.

Likewise, in Episode 4: "Gender Identity," I found a single article which opened up an entire field of research. Scientific American Mind published the article "Is There Something Unique about the Transgender Brain?" by Francine Russo on January 1, 2016. This article examines various studies that use brain imaging and other techniques to show that there are real structural differences between a trans person's brain and the brains of natal men and women. Included in this article is research by psychobiologist Antonio Guillamon of the National Distance Education University in Madrid and neuropsychologist Carme Junqué Plaja of the University of Barcelona which found that the differences in brain structures found in trans people are present before treatment with hormone replacement therapy and are enhanced by the treatment. Also covered is a study by psychologist Sarah M. Burke of VU University Medical Center in Amsterdam and biologist Julie Bakker of the Netherlands Institute for Neuroscience which looks at the brain's response to certain smells and finds that trans people's brains react more like the brains of natal people of their experienced gender. In other words, a trans person's brain functions more like the brain of a person who was born as their experienced gender than the brains of people of their own birth sex. By looking up these studies and examining the literature reviews within, I was able to accomplish a great deal of reading on the subject of Gender Identification which became part of Episode 4.

The concept of sexuality in relation to gender is quite complex and I found it necessary to devote two episodes to this subject. Episode 5: "Sexual Orientation" is the

more academically inclined of the two as it looks at the divide among gender researchers in regards to where sexuality comes from—is sexuality an inborn trait or is it learned? For the inborn or “Born this way” side, I rely heavily on two research studies. The first is Dick Swaab’s “Sexual differentiation of the brain and behavior” (Best Practice & Research Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism, 2007). In this study, Swaab measures the brain activity in men and women, gay and straight, as they look at sexually explicit material. Swaab finds that gay men and straight women have similar brain patterns while aroused as do straight men and lesbians though that connection is not as strong. This leads Swaab to declare that sexuality is an inborn trait. In his 2002 book Digit Ratio: A Pointer to Fertility, Behavior and Health, John Manning updated his own 1998 article in which he posits that the difference in the length of the index and ring fingers is due to the effects of testosterone on a fetus in the first trimester of pregnancy. Men tend to have ring fingers that are slightly longer than their index finger while women’s index and ring fingers tend to be nearly the same length. Manning also notes that women who have a more “manly” finger ratio are more likely to be lesbians. This leads many to believe that this indicates that there is a hormonal component to sexual orientation.

Pushing back on these studies is an entire book of essays, Neurofeminism edited by A. Jaap Jacobson (2012). Two of the essays were particularly helpful. Letitia Meynell’s “The Politics of Pictured Reality: Locating the Object from Nowhere in fMRI” effectively argues that researchers like Swaab are essentially finding what they have already decided exists. Meynell believes that the brain patterns detected by Swaab and others are more a reflection of their own biases than of actual brain functions comparing their

studies to the late Eighteenth-century studies that “proved” hysteria, lesbianism and being a suffragette all were caused by “displaced uteruses.” In “Re-Queering the Brain,” Isabelle Dussauge points out that the fMRI studies of Swaab and others only include men (gay and straight) and women (also, gay or straight). Essentially, these studies enforce both a gender binary by ignoring trans and gender-neutral people and a sexuality binary by ignoring bisexuals, pansexuals, asexuals and so on. Combining these studies with a basic historical perspective of Roman, Greek, Persian and other civilizations created the learned sexuality argument in Episode 5.

Episode 6: “More on Sexuality” looks at three sexual identities to examine what they can tell us about sexuality in general—Pansexuality, Asexuality and Demisexuality. For Asexuality and Demisexuality, I rely on the websites for their associated advocacy groups, [asexuality.com](http://asexuality.com) and [demisexuality.com](http://demisexuality.com). These websites provide definitions, analysis and links to further reading for these identities. For Pansexuality, I start with the CNN Online article “What it means to be pansexual.” This news article defines pansexuality as “a romantic or sexual attraction focused on traits other than sex or gender. In other words, someone who identifies as pansexual is capable of being attracted to multiple sexes and gender identities . . .” The article goes on to highlight the origin of the term in the work of Sigmund Freud and several organizations and researchers currently working in the field. By examining the work of these groups and individuals, I am able to build a knowledge base on pansexuality that inform the video.

Episode 7: “Romantic Orientation” is primarily an explanation of Dr. Lisa Diamond’s 2003 paper “What Does Sexual Orientation Orient?” In this paper, Diamond

finds that sexual attraction and affection bonding (the basis of romantic love) are not the same thing, that we can fall in love with people to whom we are not normal sexually attracted and, even if we're not initially sexually attracted to someone, if we fall in love with them we can learn to sexually desire them. To show these concepts in real life, I use articles from popular magazines such as Salon's "I'm a Lesbian Marrying a Man" and "I'm An Otherwise Straight Man (Who Fell In Love With His Best Friend)" found on MindBodyGreen.com.

The final episode of *The Gender Series*, Episode 8: "Gender Presentation" does not rely heavily on academic research because at this point in time, there doesn't seem to be much strong research being done. Therefore, I take concepts from SJWiki.com and gender.wikia.com and expand upon them to form my own take on gender expression.

### CHAPTER 3

Principle photography for *The Gender Series* was done in home in a converted bedroom. Foam sound baffles were attached to three of the four walls and loosely hung tapestries were suspended from the ceiling to deaden as much echo as possible in the room. Two studio lights (1000W) were installed with one used as an unfiltered spot and the other as a fill light with a soft box attached to lessen the number of shadows cast. A third background light was not needed because the subject was close to a bare wall which was keyed out of the final rendering.

Video was captured with a Canon T3i/600D DSLR camera with an 11-55mm autofocus and image stabilizing lens. While this is an older camera, it still has the picture quality and features necessary for this intentionally simple production. Audio was captured with a Rode VideoMic shotgun microphone attached to the Canon and a Zoom H-1 Handy Recorder on a tripod set up eight inches from the subject's position. This arraignment allowed for a further reduction in echo and improved the overall sound quality of the recording.

Recording sessions were a single person affair. I would start the camera and then the H-1 recording, clap my hands to simulate a clap board, start Simple Teleprompter on my Samsung Note 10.1 tablet, have a seat on a stool in front of the H-1 and wait for the script to scroll up on the tablet. Every video was created from a single take so multiple takes were needed for each video until a full and complete reading of a script was accomplished. The most difficult part of the sessions was remembering to act. A simple reading of the script was quite boring so in order to engage the audience, I had to do each video in character and perform it as if I were on a stage. This was also in keeping with the TEDTalk lectures that inspired the series.

Post-production work was handled with Adobe production software. Premier Pro CC was used primarily for color correction, keying, simple video animations such as fades and simulated camera movement and text animations such as captions and lower thirds. The fact that I was editing single-camera/single-angle/single-take video made further use of Premier's functions unnecessary. Sound editing was done in Audition where I mixed the audio from the camera and the Handy Recorder together or simply



replaced the audio from the camera with that from the Handy Recorder, reduced the ambient noise and then used a parametric equalizer to isolate and reduce any problem frequencies in recording caused by the room. More complex animations were created using a combination of Illustrator where figures were created and AfterEffects which was used to add motion to the figures.

The greatest difficulty experienced during post-production involved keying and sound quality. By necessity, I filmed the segments against a white wall that was uneven in appearance, so I chose to key out the wall. The difficulty arose from making such a common color transparent. Often it wasn't totally detrimental because the white in the footage was being replaced with white from the digital background so the transparency wasn't noticeable. However, I did discover that I had to wear a good deal of makeup while filming because of this technique. If I wasn't wearing makeup, the glare from the lights would reflect off my skin creating a white area which would be keyed out. I ended up with a hole in my forehead and sternum. Reshooting while wearing makeup from hairline to chest fixed the problem.

The problems I had with sound quality happened because of the echo in the room. Even with multiple surfaces to break up the echoes, early takes of the series had a hollow sound. Adding the sound baffling described above helped a great deal but it wasn't until I added the Handy Recorder to the process that I was able to achieve a high quality sound.

The final step to the process was making the videos available to the public. This was done simply by uploading the videos to YouTube and making them public with a

variety of search tags. I also embedded the videos into my own website (addisonsagenda.com). The website also contains a blog where I discuss gender issues and a space for other forms of artwork I have produced. Currently, I am promoting the videos through Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

## CHAPTER 4

The final form of *The Gender Series* and *The Gender Mixer* is an eight-part video series presented to the public through YouTube and a personal website. Each episode of the *Gender Series* is an intentionally simple and low-key presentation of research done in the fields of gender theory and sexuality. Information from psychological, neurological, sociological and historical research is presented with more than a touch of levity and simple but engaging animations and photos.

Each episode of *The Gender Series* attempts to educate its audience on one facet of modern gender theory. Episode One explains that the way many people think of gender, the "Gender Binary" with men on one side and women on the other, is actually a cultural construct that is not shared by all members of our society and is in some ways collapsing. The "Gender Mixer" as a way of explaining gender theory is covered in Episode Two. The idea that our species is not as dimorphic as we are taught to believe but, in fact, there is a "Spectrum of Sex" is explored in Episode Three. "Gender Identity" or the internal sense of gender we all have is the focus of Episode Four as is the concept that transgender people exist because of their brain structures which many theorists believe are somewhere in between the structures one sees in natal men and women.

The concept of sexuality within gender theory revealed itself to be more complicated than one episode would be appropriate for, so the subject is divided into two. Episode Five of the *Gender Series*, "Sexual Orientation," looks at the controversy between the "Born This Way" theory of sexuality which posits that sexuality is an inborn, intrinsic trait and the "Learned Sexuality" theory which says that all sexuality is determined through experience. Episode Six: "More on Sexuality" explores the concepts of Asexuality, Pansexuality and Demisexuality and proposes that all of these are not so much identities separate from others but that they are actually intrinsic parts of human sexuality simply taken to an extreme.

An episode possibly second only to Episode Five in terms of controversy is Episode Seven which looks at "Romantic Orientation" and its separation from sexual orientation. This episode explores the theories of Dr. Lisa Diamond which postulate that we don't necessarily fall in love with people to whom we are sexually attracted but we can actually develop desire for someone we love even if they are not of the sex we usually find ourselves attracted to.

Finally, Episode Eight looks at "Gender Presentation," the way we all perform our gender every day and the culturally based visual vocabulary that we use to do so. This episode wraps up with a final look at the "Gender Mixer."

All of these videos reside on YouTube but as part of this creative project, they are embedded on a page of a standalone website, [addisonsagenda.com](http://addisonsagenda.com). In addition to the video page, there is a page devoted to the Gender Mixer and a blog where I discuss gender theory issues as seen through the lens of my own life. The Gender Mixer page

displays the entire Gender Mixer and also breaks it down to its component parts. Each of the parts are described so that users of the site can engage with the Gender Mixer and hopefully use the Mixer as a tool in exploring their own concept of gender.

My blog on the site is a very personal and open attempt to connect gender theory to everyday life. In it, I discuss sex and sexuality, coming out to friends and family, learning more about my own personality and presentation and many more issues. After talking about my own issues, I try to relate them to some part of gender theory and sometimes even specific research.

To further my endeavor in this field, I plan to start a small business that may evolve into a non-profit where I will teach a seminar on the topics I have learned during this project to businesses and possibly religious institutions. I will adapt the material in this project to enhance the seminar and alter my currently personal website to be a business website promoting my services.

It is my hope that the videos, website and blog will connect with a larger audience and help people better understand themselves or loved ones who are struggling with gender or sexuality issues and that my seminars will help the business and religious communities better understand and serve the LGBTQ community.

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